

Press Release 6-17-2022

### **Class of 2022 Graduation at Southern Regional High School**

The 65<sup>th</sup> Commencement Ceremony took place at Southern Regional High School, Manahawkin, on Wednesday June 15<sup>th</sup> honoring 505 students. Pomp and Circumstance was played as Assistant Chief Administrator, Megan Vile led the students to the stadium while the audience cheered and applauded the graduates.

Principal Joseph Medica greeted everyone to the commencement followed by The Pledge of Allegiance, led by Julie Ann Simms. Julie has been appointed to the United States Air Force Academy where she will major in physics. The Honors Select Choir sang The Star-Spangled Banner under the direction of Carolyn Placa.

Class Advisors Brittany Elsasser and Caitlin Rinaldi announced the students who have enlisted in the military, the Top 20 of the class, and the Distinguished Scholars. Principal Medica presented the class to Chief School Administrator, Craig Henry to receive their diplomas.

Class President Cole Nemes delivered the welcoming remarks and emphasized the uniqueness of the last few years. He reflected on “Every moment we had here was surrounded by the people that meant the most to us. Moments that made us grown, helped us learn, and shaped us into the people we are today”. Cole will be attending Boston University and pursuing a degree in Pre-Law.

Valedictorian Shannon Flaherty told the audience “Each of our unique journeys are our own to experience as we fall into the cyclic rhythm of our own clocks. There is no race to one singular finish line, nor is there a medal awarded to the fastest to get there.” Shannon will attend John’s Hopkins University to study Aerospace Engineering.

Salutatorian Grace Ditmar said, “The spirit of Southern, the commitment to perseverance, pride, and positivity will endure long after we leave here tonight. We entered four years ago, and this morning, as students. And we’ll leave this field tonight, as graduates.” Grace will be attending Lehigh University and will be pursuing a degree in Computer Science.

Vice-President Mitch Gallacher delivered the closing remarks. He quoted Henry David Thoreau “It’s not what you look at that matters, it’s what you see.” With those words he asked ... “that my fellow classmates, whether it be hardship or fortune that lies ahead, to continue to walk with your chin up, combat each of life’s challenges with confidence, greet all you encounter with a smile, and stay committed to excellence.” Mitch will be attending Ocean County College and will pursue a degree in Biology and neuroscience.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the graduates tossed their hats into the air followed by a cannon blast of streamers. The evening was filled with laughter, hugs, tears, and wonderful memories that will last a lifetime.

Southern Regional Class of 2022 Top Ten:



Rank 1: Shannon Denise Flaherty  
Hometown: Waretown, NJ  
College: John's Hopkins University  
Major: Aerospace Engineering



Rank 2: Grace Catherine Ditmar  
Hometown: Manahawkin, NJ  
College: Lehigh University  
Major: Computer Science



Rank 3: Julie Ann Simms  
Hometown: Waretown, NJ  
College: United States Air Force Academy  
Major: Physics



Rank 4: Andie Jean Purks  
Hometown: Manahawkin, NJ  
College: Rutgers University  
Major: Political Science & Journalism



Rank 5: Mary Kathryn Reilly  
Hometown: West Creek, NJ  
College: Boston College  
Major: Mathematics



Rank 6: Joseph Gianni Fabian  
Hometown: Manahawkin, NJ  
College: St. Joseph's University  
Major: Accounting



Rank 7: Emma Sophia Wasacz  
Hometown: Manahawkin, NJ  
College: University of Pittsburg  
Major: Applied Mathematics



Rank 8: Gavin James Bates  
Hometown: Tuckerton, NJ  
College: Stockton University  
Major: Civil Engineering & Physics



Rank 9: Kai William Manzella  
Hometown: Manahawkin, NJ  
College: Steven's Institute of Technology  
Major: Mathematics



Rank 10: Mitch William Gallacher  
Hometown: Manahawkin, NJ  
College: Ocean County College  
Major: Biology & Neuroscience

